

# GLOBAL GOVERNANCE AND TURKEY: A TWO WAY WINDOW FOR A RISING POWER

*Turkey with its unique attributes of geography, capable leadership, a swath of turkophone, recently independent countries at its door step, a long lasting special alliance with America, and set to join the EU as its first ever Muslim member, is proving to be a case study of an aspiring bona fide member in this new international global governance architecture. Its much-debated and much-disputed experiment of a multilateral foreign policy, meant to exploit its newfound strategic depth, is proving adequately successful to allow this set of policies to continue. However Turkey is also discovering that the new window to the world, 'Global Governance' is also a two-way street. The more it uses global governance to look outward through it and change the world to its own best interests, the same happens with other world players, new and old. Global Governance is the window through which they also acquire the legitimacy to affect Turkey itself to best suit their own visions of the new Global Architecture and power aspirations. It is a slippery floor for any aspiring new player but the benefits presented are immense, long-lasting and perhaps worth a metamorphosis.*

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## *Brave New World*<sup>1</sup>

Few question that the 20th century was one of the most memorable ones in recorded human history in all respects. During the brief span of only 100 years, man managed to utilize inventions of varying uses that made his life more productive and paved the way for further developments. Institutions of a far-reaching nature were also established, ensuring the implementation of laws conducive to better and more harmonious cohabitation among nations, states and people imbued with common themes of fairness, justice and the respect of basic human rights. Man made it to the moon and paved also the way for the further exploration of the galaxies, embarking on ways in which commercial use of space would commence.

Unfortunately, the 20th century will also be recorded in human history as one that witnessed the greatest global wars resulting in tens of millions of deaths. Nuclear technology was invented but was first put to use through the dropping of nuclear bombs on humans. The Arms Race in nuclear weapons was unleashed between two Superpowers that divided the world into their own turfs and lasted for many decades thus shifting attention and valuable resources to annihilating each other. The collapse of the Soviet Empire brought these processes to a halt but did not do away with the compounded baggage of the past. In the early 90s many savage wars were fought in Europe among ethnic majorities and minorities that included massacres, ethnic cleansing, and alliances of states pursuing their own self interest to the detriment of universal values. This time the stakes many, the temptations more and the deficit of reason and foresight again great.

After the end of the bipolar world of the two superpowers, hopes of a 'Brave New World' became quickly tarnished. More and more it seems to be reminiscent of the 'Great Roman Empire' after the partition of the Roman Empire into two; it was neither 'Great', nor 'Roman' or 'Empire' and likewise, the post-Cold War world, neither 'Brave', nor 'New' or 'World'.

One main difference though in this 'new' reality shaping up in our recent history that we are still living through is not the neat separation of our world in two massive camps or schools of thought but rather the simultaneous creation of groupings of states and nations united by the pursuit of common goals and that of members or solitary states pursuing their own individual interests. Even more confusing, the 'groupings' seem to be continuously shifting across themes, issues and are scarce in longevity. Sources of this new vogue in international relations can be found in the rising affluence of many: an increasingly confident China, an ever-expanding EU, a resurgent Russia and the world's biggest democracy India. All share an additional characteristic: they are members of the Nuclear Club, all possessing nuclear arms stockpiles or capabilities.

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<sup>1</sup> James Rosenau, 'Toward an Ontology for Global Governance', in Martin Hewson and Timothy J. Sinclair eds., *Approaches to Global Governance Theory*, (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1999.)

## *New Kid on the Block: An Ambitious Turkey*

How then can a country lacking nuclear power be treated as an increasingly important actor in the world scene? Nobody can doubt Turkey's credentials as a force to reckon with due to its unique geo-strategic location, a hub of the world's biggest energy pipelines, its booming, its close alliance with the world's sole superpower, and the first Muslim country in the world that has been granted candidacy by the EU. Turkey has been seen, since the Özal Presidency in the 1980s, as a country with potential, but its arrival as a rising regional power surprised many in forcefulness and defiance. The skillful handling of its fortunes by its able leaders and the Erdoğan Government merits credit. However the changing international terrain after the collapse of the Soviet Empire in the early 1990s and the ensuing urgent need for a new Global Architecture as a new *modus operandi* has played an important role in Turkey carving out its own new niche in the world.

In the resulting chaos of the 1990s and the urgently engineered new interaction of international stakeholders towards a much-needed balance, Turkey indeed made its biggest and most spectacular strides carrying its own weight on the world map. By joining the bandwagon of the New Global Architecture of legitimacy however, Turkey also accepted all the rules as well. No opportunity here for the usual *a la Carte* treatment where incidental guests can choose what they fancy leaving the rest out of their plate. This privilege of joining the network of Global Governance comes also with obligations for Turkey.

### *Global Governance is Many Things but not World Government*

Attempting to convey a simple, specific definition to a new, complex and general mechanism in international affairs is not easy but we are blind without one. Thus, *Global Governance is the political interaction of transnational actors aimed at solving problems that affect more than one state or region when there is no power of enforcing compliance.*<sup>2</sup> The temptation to rush to the UN as the already existing institution that houses this concept of global governance is strong but problematic.

Traditionally, governance has been associated with 'governing', or with political authority, institutions and, ultimately, control. Governance in this particular sense denotes formal political institutions that aim to coordinate and control independent social relations and that have the ability to enforce decisions. Authors like *James Rosenau*,<sup>3</sup> however, have also used the term to denote the regulation of interdependent relations in the absence of overarching political author-

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<sup>2</sup> Diane Stone, "Global Public Policy, Transnational Policy Communities and their Networks", *Journal of Policy Sciences*, 2008.

<sup>3</sup> Saba Riazati, "A Closer Look: Professor seeks stronger UN", *The Daily Bruin*, October 18, 2006.

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ity, such as the international system. Some now speak of the development of ‘global public policy.’<sup>4</sup>

Many other scholars of international repute have also submitted their own varying definitions and interpretations of this important new concept in the new Global Architecture. ‘*Global Governance*’ is not a normative term denoting good or bad practice. It is a descriptive term, referring to concrete cooperative problem-solving arrangements. They may be formal, in the form of laws or formally constituted institutions to manage collective affairs by a variety of actors, such as state authorities, intergovernmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), private sector entities, other civil society actors and individuals. But these may also be informal (i.e. practices, guidelines) or temporary units (as in the case of coalitions of parties, states etc)<sup>5</sup>. Thus, ‘Global Governance’ may be defined as ‘the complex of formal and informal institutions, mechanisms, relationships and processes between and among states, markets, citizens and organizations, both inter- and non-governmental through which collective interests on the global plane are articulated, rights and obligations are established and differences are mediated.’<sup>6</sup> For this new system to work though, one important element must be in place: ‘consensus’. Consensus is logical to have in order to resolve other states’ affairs and problems but when the tables are turned, we are hard at task to determine to a sovereign state to accept it for itself in any of its own internal great matters of government.

Consider the intricacies of current Turkish Foreign policies as of late: There there was a wide and clear consensus on the legitimacy of the NATO bombing campaign of Serbia in 1999 coming to the rescue of Kosovars in the midst of ethnic cleansing. It is highly questionable if Turkey’s occasional mini-invasions into Northern Iraq in pursuit of PKK forces have the same consensus among allies and foes in the international arena, even though, admittedly, the recent incursion was tacitly tolerated vis a vis the ones in the past. This may become a clearer dilemma in the future if autonomy and furthermore, quasi-independence efforts by the Iraqi Kurds continue engulfing Mosul and Kirkuk, areas that have massive oil reserves beneath them. Should it get to that, what would the Turkish Government do in order to protect its vital strategic interests? In light of the recent international architecture of power that the practice of ‘Global Governance’ allows, Turkey has been participating with others in shaping or affecting policies in far reaches of the planet and/or global themes which quite literally, have not been directly relevant to its own core interests. This practice has been relatively pain-free. Reversing now the direction of this process would make it

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<sup>4</sup> Diane Stone, “Global Public Policy, Transnational Policy Communities and Their Networks”, *Journal of Policy Sciences*, 2008.

<sup>5</sup> Margaret P. Karns and Karen A. Mingst, ‘International Organizations: The Politics and Processes of Global Governance’, Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2004.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas G. Weiss and Ramesh Thakur, ‘The UN and Global Governance: An Idea and its Prospects’, Indiana University Press, 2007

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obvious to any international affairs observer that Turkey would have in essence also allowed other 'world players, current and/or rising ones a direct channel to its own internal affairs as well as its own regional back yard welcome to the new world of 'Global Consensus Governance'.

For Turkey the obvious question has become: How much would 'consensus' in making joint decisions then be stretched juxtaposed to the traditional definition of Turkish national interest?

Obviously, the issue at hand is how to calibrate the two-way nature of the accepted new tool of Global Foreign Policy ('Global Governance') adequately in order to make maximum use of its benefits and ensure limited allowance for its (grave) shortcomings inside Turkey. In a substantive departure from its past in exercising its foreign policies, Turkey is really in a new international environment where a new 'language' is spoken.

### ***Environmental Engineering at its Best***

Turkey is growing economically at a galloping pace. It is politically facing the challenges of a population still divided on substantive matters such as the growing role of Islam in everyday life. And in foreign policy it is increasingly getting detached from its traditional allies and trying to realize its potential as a regional power, pursuing its own optimum foreign policies -sometimes in conflict with allies who still constitute its main power platform in global politics, but increasingly confident about its ability to do such.

Turkey is a massive Muslim country on the way to becoming a member of the EU, a precedent for other Muslim countries. Its EU credentials have been questioned by Western scholars and politicians as coming from a country which is, 'Too Big, Too Muslim and Too Non-European to join!'

Incidentally, Turkey's EU 'adventure' that began in 1961 with its Association Agreement and is now well underway after having been baptized as an Accession candidate, is an interesting variation of 'Global Governance'. An act of wanton entry to a new network of 'Institutional Legitimacy' comprising the world's largest free market with obvious advantages to its own booming economy. At the same time, the requirements of this Power Club are many and require Turkey to essentially reshape its society and polity. Yet, Erdoğan's religiously conservative government is powering ahead.

Euroscepticism in Turkey itself and individual EU members' second thoughts and offerings of 'a special relationship' instead of membership raise the question of how far Turkey would be willing to go to achieve full entry into the EU.

Turkey's juggling act to convince its own population as well as its prospective EU co-members of the vast long-term benefits to both, is really admirable but is it also sincere?

Does Turkey accept the inevitable transparency in its own affairs to its comrades in arms as part of the benefits it is allowed to reap from actively participating in this 'Global Governance'.

Turkish diplomacy is notorious throughout the last two centuries for being able to be resourceful in situations where resources in Turkey's favor were quite scarce. This bodes well for the country overall. Creativity, resourcefulness and outright diplomatic engineering in this new environment in global politics will be the main arsenal depots available to it.

Changes enforced via such an informal but rigid international consensus entailed by active membership of the 'Global Governance Club' are far-reaching and usually irreversible. Turkish leaders are credited customarily with high intelligence, are accepted always as being methodic and are long term in their logic and analyses. Rarely do succeeding governments make dramatic U turns in the course charted.

Policymaking is never a linear practice and occasional setbacks as well as conscious stance changes are inevitable, and quite often required in achieving strategic goals. Such blimps seem to be employed in Turkish foreign policy effectively, without negotiating the strategic goals of the country.

Getting more embedded in the environment of global governance poses Turkey a dilemma with the implied internal metamorphosis however it also promises dramatically superior and long lasting benefits.

### ***The Record?***

Diplomatic and international affairs history is recorded at international fora, coalitions, and formal alliances. After World War II, first the UN and later other founding members of the new post-war international power architecture were the real arbiters of international relations among states. As new associations and unions of states, economic bodies and others sprang up to advance their own group's interests (i.e. regional, international, global etc) the importance and role of those early bodies, such as the UN, IMF, World Bank, and NATO was diluted. The increasing pace of the EU's deepening and broadening has awarded it status of a global player.

Influence and power shifted and was increasingly shared by three different powers spanning the globe after the end of the Cold War. Kennichi Ohmae's famous

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prophetic book of the 1980s captures the importance of this incident.<sup>7</sup> The argument is that global economic competition would result in three main Powers in the World; the US, the EU and Japan whose currencies would be the cornerstone of the international financial architecture. The prophecy has become quite true in terms of currencies and the incidence of 'Global Governance' is quite influenced and affected by this. China's rise to prowess in economic and political terms in the early 21st century fits in as part of the rise of the geographical bloc.

More than any other Turkish Government before it, the Erdoğan Government is credited for having achieved real progress regarding the country's long standing aspiration to join the EU.

### *The EU & Turkey*

A green light from the EU for the accession process has led to productive momentum, despite second thoughts by many in the EU as well as existing, simmering problems with Cyprus, Greece and France particularly. Even though setbacks have indeed occurred, until now the accession process has been delayed rather than derailed.

The interests of other important stakeholders like the U.S., Britain, Germany and others have managed to become a potent weapon in the hands of the able statesmen of the Erdoğan government and the Turkish train to the EU is still on track.

The above-mentioned *deux machinae* have anchored important national interests of their own to the Turkish chariot in their own global visions and plans as global players.

The EU process has thus fostered alternative 'corridors' of communication and alliances among disparate players to Turkey, its allies and vice versa, thus lessening the importance of formal reliance on other existing international fora and agreements.

The UN for example has for decades been an important tool for Turkish foreign policy. The EU advent and process regularly surpassed it in importance both for the above-mentioned powers as well as for Turkey itself.

In the process, Turkey has had to change laws and institutions to be in tune with the EU. Most skeptics point out that upon full accession, Turkey's population of over 75 million will accord it the status of the most populous member and the most seats at the European Parliament. Combining these votes with those of Britain's and Poland's - the staunchest US allies in the EU- raises concern about the increase in Washington's influence that Turkey may bring.

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<sup>7</sup> Kenichi Ohmae, 'Triad Power', Free Press, NY, USA, 1985, 2002.



## *Russia & Turkey*

Russia has been anything but Turkey's friend and ally in the centuries leading to the present day. They fought wars against each other either directly or as parts of alliances and the Turks have always viewed the Russians with suspicion by the Turks. Turkey has held suspicion about Russia's designs regarding the gates to the Black Sea. However, their relations have recently been going through a spectacular change driven mostly by economic considerations. The energy map of the world is at Turkey's doorstep and Russia needs to ensure the uninterrupted flow of oil and natural gas to Europe.

Both sides have recognized that global shifts have brought about a convergence of interests that far surpasses their age-old parochial differences. Themed coalitions based on consensus are engulfing the globe. Both sides are viewing this new reality as a win-win situation.

## *The Middle East & Turkey*

When the U.S. decided to invade Iraq, topple the Saddam Hussein regime and use the event as the design board of the new Middle East that would ensue, Turkey was meant to provide all assistance to their staunchest ally. Turkey's allowing the use of its land for the opening a new front in Northern Iraq would have shortened the war and saved American and allied lives.

Despite the 30 billion dollars and additional 'gifts' promised by the Bush Administration, the Erdoğan government failed to secure a 'yes' from the Turkish Grand National Assembly, thus shocking Americans and leaving a bad feeling looming in the air to this day.

Turkey had a natural hesitation to get involved in a major war against an Arab state on its borders fearing a backlash either from organized interests or from the Arabs themselves. There is no evidence to this date that the Turkish government formally regrets these developments thus indicating that Turkey's other interests were and are at stake.

The benefits of the new environment of global governance far surpass the 30 billion dollars promised by the Bush Administration. Moreover, the increasing number of nations asking of the U.S. to withdraw five years down the line, line indicates the damage in its relations with other nations Turkey avoided.

Following the great benefits of 'themed consensus', Turkey has managed to become Israel's most important partner in the Middle East at a time that honest brokers are hard to find in the quagmire of the Arab-Israeli dispute. Policy making has become a more tactical exercise better anointed as 'Interest Engineering'.

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## *Conclusion*

A few years ago, an unusual book was published in Turkey by the chief foreign policy advisor to Prime Minister Tayyip Erdoğan on matters of Turkish foreign policy. Its very title, '*Strategic Depth*'<sup>8</sup> was indicative of the new turns that were taking place within the minds and hands of the people charting Turkey's foreign policies in this most challenging international environment.

The constituent elements of this 'Strategic Depth', i.e. geographical depth and historical depth are of vast importance as sources of core competences that few countries in the world enjoy. For example, Prof. Ahmet Davutoğlu, accords equal right to historical depth as Turkey does to a handful of countries and multi-national empires like, Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, China, Japan and Turkey. Geographically also, Turkey is a part of Europe as it is of Asia. It is part of the Mediterranean as it is of the Caucasus and the Black Sea. Geographical depth is to him part of historical depth, the fusion of the synergies of which magnify Turkey's strategic depth.

Carrying such weight in international affairs provides Turkey the opportunity to reap the dividends of its unique geo-political position in the world. These positions describe a status that Turkey has always enjoyed albeit this has been accentuated by the monumental developments in the international scene over the last two decades. What is it that allows then Turkey the right to seek more, to claim and secure more for itself through a more multilateral foreign policy than before?

The new international environment imbued by tenets of 'Global Governance' allows wide latitude to Turkey to attempt to employ its core advantages across all strata of policies globally focused on themed targets without necessarily sacrificing further alliances with alternate partners.

The cushioned bi-polar world has come to an end and this allows a country like Turkey to seek its place in the world without the need to abandon old and trusted allies. It is the author's conclusion that all calculations run on a cost/benefit analysis for Turkey's new multilateral foreign policy, i.e. pursuing various goals at the same time (some of them conflicting at times) will eventually reap more benefits than the cost it will be asked to pay.

In Turkey's case, the cost is that of making Turks themselves understand the new position their country can take in global politics by making certain adjustments at the household level. Barring the extremists at both ends of the political spectrum, the vast bulk of the Turkish electorate seem to possess both the patience and perseverance to heed their leaders' calls for change. During last year's Parliamentary Elections, Prime Minister Erdoğan's Party secured 47 percent. The Turks seem ready to pursue the path Prime Minister Erdoğan is laying out.

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<sup>8</sup> Ahmet Davutoglu, '*Strategic Depth*', Istanbul, Beykent University, 2001.

